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## **Lilly Endowment Launches Initiative to Help Clergy Thrive in Congregational Ministry**

### *Second Round of Funding to Be Available in 2018*

INDIANAPOLIS – Lilly Endowment Inc. has launched a national initiative to help clergy working in congregations thrive in their roles as pastoral leaders. Through the Thriving in Ministry Initiative, the Endowment has approved 24 grants totaling more than \$20 million to seminaries, universities, denominational judicatories and a retreat center.

The grants will help these organizations create or strengthen programs that help pastors build relationships with experienced clergy who can serve as role models and mentors and guide them through key leadership challenges in congregational ministry.

These grants make up the first round of funding in this national effort. A second round of funding will be made available through a national competitive grant program. Information will be available in mid-January through the Endowment's website, [www.lillyendowment.org](http://www.lillyendowment.org).

Thriving in Ministry is designed to help organizations create and launch programs that support pastors as they move through professional transitions and face challenges posed by their particular ministry contexts. These include programs for new pastors in the first few years of ministry, for mid-career pastors moving into new ministry contexts for the first time, and for pastors, such as church planters, who face unique challenges that arise within their specific congregational settings.

The 24 organizations receiving first-round funding reflect a wide variety of Christian communities, including African Methodist Episcopal, Baptist, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Churches of Christ, Brethren, Episcopal, the Evangelical Covenant Church, Lutheran, Mennonite, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and Quaker organizations, as well as interdenominational and non-denominational organizations. Many of the organizations are working to help clergy from multiple denominational traditions.

Programs they are developing include efforts that:

- Connect candidates for ordained ministry with mentor-pastors who help them make the transition to full-time pastoral leaders as they transition into their first pastorates
- Create mission immersion experiences for midcareer pastors to help them foster life-giving and mutually enriching relationships with each other and reinvigorate their passion for ministry by building relationships with mission communities
- Establish peer groups for pastors serving congregations in rural and urban areas that will provide them with coaching, mentoring and spiritual direction from seasoned pastors as well as connect them with organizations that are creating new and innovative models of ministry
- Bring together Latino/a clergy who are in the early stages of their careers with pastor-mentors to reflect on effective practices of pastoral leadership in churches in transition
- Gather clergywomen from different denominations for a series of retreats that include learning, prayer and spiritual mentoring to reflect on the unique challenges encountered by women who are leading congregations

Strengthening pastoral leadership in Christian congregations has been a grantmaking priority of the Endowment for nearly 25 years. Endowment-funded programs and initiatives have helped pastors make the critical transition from seminary student to pastoral leader; encouraged pastors to form peer learning groups for ongoing professional development; supported theological schools in their efforts to prepare seminarians to lead congregations; and provided grants to congregations to enable pastors to step away from the daily demands of pastoral leadership for a period of renewal.

Thriving in Ministry builds upon recent studies that examined the common professional and personal challenges pastors face, including the Endowment-funded, Flourishing in Ministry research project, directed by Matt Bloom at the University of Notre Dame.

“We have received many reports from pastors about the changing demands of serving as a pastoral leader today,” said Christopher L. Coble, the Endowment’s vice president for religion. “Many pastors are seeking to find role models and wise colleagues who can guide them through professional transitions and challenges encountered in particular ministry contexts. Our hope is that the initiative will support a new wave of efforts that help clergy thrive and lead their congregations more effectively.”

Through a request for proposals in the second round of the Thriving in Ministry Initiative, the Endowment will invite nonprofit charitable organizations in the United States to submit proposals for developing new or strengthening existing programs that support clergy and help them thrive as pastoral leaders. These organizations include - but

are not limited to - seminaries, colleges and universities, retreat centers, denominational judicatories, faith-based agencies and other religious organizations.

The following organizations have received first-round grants in the Thriving in Ministry Initiative:

**Asbury Theological Seminary**, Wilmore, KY - \$999,515

**Ashland University**, Ashland, OH - \$993,514

**Brite Divinity School**, Fort Worth, TX - \$995,145

**Catholic Extension**, Chicago, IL - \$1 million

**Catholic Theological Union**, Chicago, IL - \$1 million

**Center for Courage and Renewal**, Seattle, WA - \$1 million

**City Seminary of New York**, New York, NY – \$1 million

**Columbia Theological Seminary**, Decatur, GA - \$1 million

**Eastern Mennonite University**, Harrisonburg, VA - \$999,893

**Fourth Episcopal District A.M.E. Church**, Chicago, IL - \$999,237

**George Fox University**, Newberg, OR - \$1 million

**Lott Carey Global Christian Missional Community**, Landover, MD - \$ 1 million

**Luther Seminary**, St. Paul, MN - \$999,999

**Memphis Theological Seminary**, Memphis, TN - \$1 million

**New York Theological Seminary**, New York, NY - \$959,996

**North Park University**, Chicago, IL - \$999,677

**Pepperdine University**, Malibu, CA - \$999,969

**Princeton Theological Seminary**, Princeton, NJ - \$1 million

**Protestant Episcopal Theological Seminary**, Alexandria, VA - \$1 million

**The Seattle School of Theology and Psychology**, Seattle, WA - \$1 million

**Sisters of St. Benedict of Beech Grove, Indiana,** Beech Grove, IN - \$ 1 million

**Texas Methodist Foundation,** Austin, TX - \$ 1million.

**University of Notre Dame,** Notre Dame, IN - \$998,716

**Virginia Union University,** Richmond, VA - \$ 1 million

### **About Lilly Endowment Inc.**

Lilly Endowment Inc. is a philanthropic foundation created in 1937 by three members of the Lilly family—J.K. Lilly, Sr. and sons J.K., Jr. and Eli—through gifts of stock in their pharmaceutical business, Eli Lilly and Company. While those gifts remain the financial bedrock of the Endowment, the Endowment is a separate entity from the company, with a distinct governing board, staff and location. In keeping with the founders' wishes, the Endowment supports the causes of community development, education and religion and maintains a special commitment to its hometown, Indianapolis, and home state, Indiana.